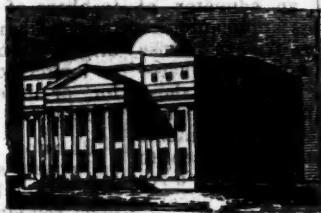


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Reports of County Superintendents.

WASHINGTON COUNTY.

Extracts from the Annual Report of WM. WRIGHT, Esq., Co. Sup't. southern section.

[Continued from the June No. of the Journal.]

LICENSING TEACHERS.

It is now a little more than two years since the abolition of the office of commissioner and inspector of common schools, and the substitution of that of town superintendent. A careful and critical observation of the practical workings of the new system, has convinced me, that in point of economy and efficiency, it has been both theoretically and practically an improvement over the old system. The new class of officers, feeling a deeper *personal* responsibility for the condition and character of the schools of their respective towns, have endeavored to devote themselves with a noble and self-sacrificing spirit to a faithful discharge of their respective duties. But most of them have felt, and some of them have found, that, as things are now constituted, to devote themselves to an honest and faithful discharge of these duties in relation to one point at least, is nothing less than *self-sacrificing*.

I am well aware that, according to the radical tendencies of the day, annual elections and rotation in office are peculiarly "democratic;" and while I would be the last individual to claim an unreasonable exemption from the application of these principles for myself or others, yet I must be permitted to say that, in most matters, there are *two* extremes as well as *one*; and that while on the one hand an official incumbent may be placed so far beyond the reach of the popular will, that he may grow careless or insolent in the discharge of duty, he may on the other hand be made, by the tenure of his office, so far the creature of individual caprice, as to lose all real independence, and thereby become the mere instrument of faction or the tool of party.

It is well known that all intellectual and moral reforms have been attained only by a protracted and persevering conflict with the prejudices and pertinacity of those whom it was most intended to benefit—so that the very idea

of reform always carries with it the admitted fact of such *mal-formations*, as to demand the making anew. Hence, it has been found, that he who attempts to reform the teachers of our common schools, or to elevate the standard of their qualifications, must necessarily come in conflict with long established usage, with popular prejudice and with deep rooted self-conceit.

Those whose original qualifications were of a most questionable character, and whose practice in teaching, even for a series of years, has failed to improve, have, by dint of management, or through the partiality of some friendly inspector, whose sense of obligation to the public, sat loosely upon him, secured a license to teach. That licence perhaps has been annually renewed for several successive years, *without a personal inspection*, upon the very plausible ground, that the applicant had previously been licensed—had already "kept a school," and secured for himself that highest plaudit usually awarded to a "school master" in olden time—"we guess he's a pretty good teacher, we don't hear any complaint." Such a person presents himself before the town superintendent and demands a license. His claim is founded upon "long service." His "paper vouchers" certifying to his qualifications "in respect to moral character, learning, and ability to teach" are presented, in formidable array, signed by all the *learned men* who have held the high office of inspectors of common schools during the eventful period for which the applicant may have been engaged in "school-keeping." He expects, as a matter of course, that his claims will be at once admitted, a certificate made out and duly signed, and *no questions asked*. And certainly it must be regarded as little less than the "height of impertinence, for a superintendent of the present day, to question the capacity or ability to teach, of one who has already "seen much service" and who claims to be a *veteran* in the cause!

But the town superintendent, in the faithful discharge of his official duty, demands, because he believes that it affords the surest and only safe test of qualifications, a *personal examination*. To this the applicant reluctantly sub-

mits, but soon furnishes conclusive evidence that he has not *now*, and probably *never* did have, the first qualification to fit him for the high and responsible position of an educator of youth. Duty demands that his application be rejected. But this teacher has friends; those friends have influence; and more than that—both teacher and friends *have votes*—and those votes may decide the fate of the superintendent at the succeeding election. The emoluments of the office furnish no adequate inducement to the superintendent to lead him to desire a re-election, yet he feels unwilling to be uncereemoniously thrust out of office, simply for *doing his duty*. But the question is now forced upon him, and he *must* decide it; either to make a compromise with his conscience, and license a man *known to be palpably destitute of the proper qualifications* necessary to fit him for the high and responsible position to which he aspires, or to reject him and *decline a re-nomination* at the coming election! or, equally humiliating, in accepting such re-nomination, to do it with the strong probability, if not moral certainty, of a mortifying defeat. And in this expectation—so balanced are parties in most of our towns—he will not generally be disappointed!

This then is no fancy sketch of my own, but what has already taken place, and may take place again. The truth is, I have little faith in any very great or general improvement in our schools, until the licensing power shall be placed in more independent hands than it is now placed: not that there is a want of disposition on the part of these officers, to elevate the standard and improve the condition of our common schools, but from the *degrading, humiliating dependence* upon the whims and caprice of those little disposed to do either, which the present laws, undesignedly, subject them to!

I speak of this the more plainly, from the fact that, *this is the known view which these officers themselves take of their position*; several of them having repeatedly stated to me, that they had entered upon the discharge of the duties of their office, with a firm determination to do their whole duty, but that they had been compelled to yield, step by step, and point by point, to the demands of the "dragocracy" of the nation, until they had found that there was no real independence attached to the office; and that unless the matter be speedily remedied, no great and permanent improvement can be made in our schools. Such opinions, from such a source, it is believed, are entitled to some weight.

Under the present system, a much larger number of persons are usually licensed, than can find places to teach. The result is, and ever must be, a warm and unequal competition for place; and, inasmuch as those least qualified in natural abilities and mental acquirements, can generally afford to "keep school," cheaper than the well qualified can afford to *teach school*, this class, too generally, obtain situations, while the really worthy and capable teacher is driven in disgust from an employment that semi-annually requires him to enter the field of dishonorable competition with ignorance and

self-conceit. As an illustration of this truth, I might mention the fact, that a large number of the best qualified and eminently successful teachers of this section of the county, have thus, within the last few years, been driven in disgust from the field, avowing that they could no longer continue in a service so poorly paid for, or little appreciated, and in which there were so few laurels to be won!

PROPOSED REMEDY.—Associate the town and county superintendents together as an examining and licensing board. Require them to meet semiannually in two or more sections of their respective counties for the transaction of business. Should Teachers' Institutes be established, let the board meet at the close of each term, for the examination of teachers; otherwise let the time be either fixed by law, or determined by the board at each semiannual adjournment. Require all persons who propose to teach in the county to present themselves for examination at these meetings, and no power to licence at any other time, except in extreme cases. No town license to be granted except by the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present, and no county license except by a unanimous vote of the board. Town licences should be good in any town in the county, but should continue in force only for one year. County licences should be held by the same tenure as at present, and both liable to be annulled either by the county superintendent, or by the concurrence of the county and the town superintendent in whose town the teacher might be engaged.

ADVANTAGES OF.—1st. Town superintendents would, at once, be relieved from that unpleasant embarrassment under which they now labor, and from that constant liability to be sacrificed upon the altar of *personal malice and spleen*, which now so effectually deprives them of all real independence; while they would, at the same time, be no less amenable to the public or the ballot box, for the manner in which they should discharge the general duties of their office than now.

2d. A large proportion of the palpably unqualified, whose only hope of obtaining a license is through favoritism, would probably not take the first step towards procuring such licence; because they would readily discover that such a principle could not be brought to bear upon a board thus independently constituted.

3d. Those who might apply, would so see and feel the necessity of a higher grade of qualifications, in order to ensure success, as could scarcely fail to lead to their attainment; for they could not but realize that the State, by this organization, intended to watch, with jealous care, over the dearest interests of the rising generation.

4. It would give dignity and character to the profession, and tend to raise it in the estimation of the people, thereby securing greater uniformity of views and practices among the teachers, and more certain and rapid improvement in the schools.

COST OF.—With regard to the expense attending the system proposed, as this should undoubtedly be taken into consideration, it is

conceived, from a careful examination of the subject, that it would be found, in the end, less expensive than that of the present system.

In this county, to supply the 250 common schools with both summer and winter teachers, there are probably not less than from 390 to 420 persons annually inspected. This costs, by the present mode of examination, not less than sixty-two and a half cents per teacher, or from \$240 to \$260 per annum. The expense of the board, constituted as proposed above, could not exceed \$23.50 per day, and might not amount to half that sum. The board, therefore, might continue in session for a time abundantly sufficient to transact all its business, and at an expense of from fifty to seventy dollars less than under present arrangements. The expenses which now annually accrue from the meeting of the board of superintendents for the appointment of state pupils to the Normal school, the selection of text books, and the regulation of other matters intimately connected with the best interests of the schools, might still be deducted from the expense; as this business, which has hitherto required special meetings, could easily be transacted at the regular semiannual meeting of the board.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PUBLIC MONEY.

The present system of apportioning the public money among the several school districts of the State according to the number of children residing in the same "over five and under sixteen," however plausible in theory, is, nevertheless, believed to be exceedingly unjust and unequal in its practical results.

The great and leading object, which the friends of popular education had, in the consecration of a common school fund, the avails of which were annually to be distributed among the several school districts of the State, I suppose, was, that it might act as a sort of incentive to induce the great mass of the people not only to establish and maintain a system of common schools, but to send their children to them that they might thereby be educated. Not but that a portion of the community would see that their children were properly educated, but that there probably was a class, of no inconsiderable magnitude, who, without this stimulus, would never exert themselves in behalf of their children, or see that the facilities for their proper cultivation were duly established. But, in determining upon a mode of distribution, or basis of apportionment, it is conceived that the most judicious and equal one was not selected; for it is a well known fact, that *more than quadruple* the amount of public money is received, in liquidation of school bills, by the children of some of our districts, to what is received in others. There is, then, not only this great inequality in the amount actually received, but, it is feared, that, in some instances, instead of operating to bring in all the children of the district into the school, it, in fact, is made to produce the *very opposite result*.

It is well known that, in many of our villages, the common schools are at a lower ebb than in most of the country districts; and that the attendance, in these villages, is much less, in proportion to the number of children residing in them, than in most other schools. Now as

the public money, in many of these places, is found to be nearly sufficient to pay the low wages of the teacher, without a rate bill, there is little or no inducement to prompt trustees or others to secure a general attendance of the scholars; but, on the contrary, a strong motive, where selfishness preponderates, to lead them to *hope*, at least, that the children of the "plebians" will not come in to crowd or corrupt the morals of their own dear offspring. A few facts, illustrative of this, may not be altogether uninteresting or un instructive.

In one of the villages of this county, numbering over one hundred and ninety children "over five and under sixteen," and receiving over \$159 "teachers and library money" from the public fund, there were found present at my last semi-annual visit, but forty-eight children in all, though *seven* of these were less than five years of age; leaving, therefore, but *forty-one*, of the children enumerated in the district, present at that time! And in another village, reporting nearly one hundred and forty children "over five and under sixteen," and receiving over \$143 from the like source, but twenty-eight children were in attendance, though *four* of these were less than five years of age!

The report of the town superintendents of the respective towns in which these villages are situated, show that for the previous year, only ninety-nine children attended the common school for a period of over *two-months*, in the village numbering over 190 children, while in that numbering nearly 140, only *forty-four* attended for a like period!*

Now the result of all this is, that those few children who do attend the common schools in these villages, receive, in fact, *much more than double*, if they do not *quadruple*, the amount of the public fund in payment of their school bills, that the children of many of our country districts do. Add to this that other important fact, that the expense of sustaining a good school, in most of our smaller districts, is nearly equal to that of our larger, and that the amount of expense thus incurred must be assessed upon a number less by more than one half, and you have, what might not inaptly be called, a sort of indirect proportion, where "more requiring less" gets "more," and "less requiring more," gets "less."

It appears to me therefore, that if a leading object of the creation of our school fund, was to *equalize*, in some measure, the burdens of education; then the plan recommended by the superintendent of Madison in 1843, would be a good one. Or, if it is proposed that, while we aim to equalize, reference must also be had to the number of children residing in the respective districts, then both objects may be measurably accomplished by apportioning one half of the public money *equally*, among the several districts, and then make *attendance* the basis of apportionment for the remainder.

In any event, I cannot but regard *attendance* as altogether a more appropriate and judicious

* It ought perhaps in justice to be added, that each of these villages has an academy, and that it appears from the reports of the town superintendents of these towns, that "a select school has been kept" in each village, and that twenty pupils were taught in the one, and thirty-five in the other.

basis of apportionment, than that of *residence*. Either of the modes suggested would, it is believed, operate as a stimulus to bring into the school all the children of the district, would do something towards equalizing the burdens of the people in educating their children, would give "more" where "more was required," and "less" where "less was needed;" and if the "daily roll" system could at the same time be abolished, (I mean as a basis for making out rate bills) it would do more towards filling up our schools and making them what they should be, THE PRACTICAL NURSERIES OF A UNIVERSAL EDUCATION, than all other mere extraneous means, save that of FREE SCHOOLS, within the power of the Legislature.

WM. WRIGHT, Supt. C. S.
Cambridge, Nov. 7th, 1845.

The Teacher.

BEAU IDEAL OF THE PERFECT TEACHER.

[A Lecture delivered before the American Institute of Instruction, at their annual meeting at Hartford, Conn., in August last, by DENISON OLMSTED, L. L. D., Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy in Yale College.]

[Concluded from our last.]

4. What are the moral qualities of the perfect teacher?

We place in the foremost rank among the constituent elements of the perfect teacher, the faith and the benevolence of the Gospel. How low is the sense of responsibility which the instructor feels to the parent, or to society, compared with that which he ought to feel to his Omniscient Judge! How humble the estimate which he forms of the value of the treasure committed to his charge, who looks at it merely in the light of time, compared with his who views it in the light of eternity! One is training a being of earth; the other a soul for heaven. The one educates for a mortal, the other for an immortal crown. The one is arming his pupil for the strife for wealth, for power, for fame; the other for truth, for liberty, for the universal diffusion of happiness among men. The one teaches all for self; the other, all for society—all for God. The highest benevolence is the legitimate fruit of such a faith; and benevolence bears so large a part in the structure of the character we are attempting to portray, that, let us draw nearer, and view it in some of its more obvious relations to that character. What qualities in a teacher can compare with a warm heart and generous affections? What enthusiasm is like that, which springs from a strong and earnest desire for the highest good and improvement of the pupil? Here is the true source of independence. It is the high prerogative of benevolence, and of benevolence alone, to inspire that moral courage, which can bear the loss of present popularity, of the favor of parents, of the attachment of the pupil himself, to do him good. I can find no other principle adequate to sustain us in the arduous and often thankless duties of our profession. No other principle can fully conquer that fastidiousness, which is apt to come over one in the constant reiteration of the same instructions. Benevolence never tires while she can feel that she is sowing the seeds of virtue in a genial soil, or pouring the light of know-

ledge into the opening mind of childhood and youth. The lesson heard, or the lecture repeated, a hundred times, inspires in the heart of benevolence an unabated interest, and awakens in the bosom of age, all the freshness and fervor of youth. It is my firm conviction, friends and fellow-instructors,—a conviction that has grown stronger with advancing years, that no other principle than this can be permanently relied on to sustain the teacher through all his labors and discouragements. Compare benevolence as a principle of action, in the preceptor, with such selfish principles as may be supposed to reign in its stead, as ambition or avarice. Ambition looks not at the good of the pupil as an ultimate object, but at its own reputation and love of praise. Its tendency is to produce showy and superficial scholars. It is unsteady in its operation, and unfaithful to such pupils as do not promise, by their genius or learning, to increase its own celebrity; and it is here, as elsewhere, followed by its usual train of disappointment, mortification and disgust. Nor is avarice a safer principle on which to rely. It is a cold and debasing principle, when it becomes the ruling passion of the instructor. When successful in gratifying its love of money, it ends in indifference to the cause of education, as well as to the welfare of its pupils; and when unsuccessful, it ends in discouragement and repining. But benevolence, like the magnet, loses nothing by what it imparts, but gains strength continually, as it is fed by its proper aliment, doing good.

Among the appropriate fruits of benevolence in the teacher, we recognize kindness, both in disposition and manner; habitual, but not affected, gentleness; the *suaviter in modo et fortiter in re*. Sternness has its place, but it is not habitual. Discipline can bear with what is childish, while it rebukes what is vicious; it can smile at what is playful, while it frowns at what is wicked. All good government is founded on fear; but perfect love casteth out fear. When the pupil has once and early learned to obey from a dread of the displeasure of his preceptor, habit will make obedience choice, and authority will assume the gentleness of love. Among the qualities of the accomplished teacher, I assign a high place to the sagacity which penetrates the peculiar disposition and genius of the pupil, and the skill which happily adapts to it a corresponding course of government and instruction. Sagacity and skill like this, are especially appropriate to those who begin with childhood. The accomplished astronomer makes it his first concern, to understand fully the mechanism and peculiarities of structure of the new and delicate instrument which he is to direct to the heavens. He studies the various precautions requisite in order to obtain the best results; he learns the nice adjustments necessary; and finally ascertains how the unavoidable errors, both of workmanship and of observation, are to be corrected or allowed for. A nicer instrument, of vastly greater delicacy, is committed to the teacher in the mind of a child of genius; and happy is that mind which meets with a preceptor, who has discernment to understand its peculiar mechanism, and patience and skill so to manage it, as to shun the

aberrations to which it is constantly prone, or to correct or allow for the errors which unavoidably occur. To that knowledge of human nature which is gained by personal observation, aided and directed by the precepts of mental philosophy, let the preceptor add a perfect discernment of all that is peculiar in the genius and disposition of his pupil, and he will then be qualified to receive this wonderful piece of mechanism from the hands of its divine artificer. Such a teacher will not form his estimate of the child so much from what he actually is, as from what, by education and by grace, he may become. If his faculties are naturally weak or dull, the case may, indeed, present real grounds for discouragement; but not so when his mind is active and strong, though his temper be selfish, obstinate and proud, and his passions headstrong and vindictive. Unpromising as such a subject might appear, I verily believe that there is a kind of training that may be applied to that child which, with the blessing of heaven, will render it highly probable he will become a virtuous and useful man. Does he burn with anger? Do not feed the flames by rebuking with anger. It is a *soft* answer that turneth away wrath. Is he selfish, let him taste the luxury of bestowing gifts; let benevolence take root in his heart and be carefully nurtured; let the rose supplant the thistle. If you would not have noxious weeds grow and flourish, occupy the soil with plants of a nobler nature. One of the highest attributes of the teacher, as already intimated, is the sagacity to discover, and the disposition to foster, superior talents. What if they be concealed under an obstinate or sulky temper? A skilful treatment will free the compound from this base alloy, and separate the silver from the dross. What if they be mingled with vanity and self-conceit? Do not on that account repress the first aspirations of genius, but trust to time and skilful training to deliver it from such unworthy associates. It is related of the celebrated Dr. Busby, that he early espied the genius of South lurking under idleness and obstinacy. "I see," (said he,) "great talents in that sulky boy, and I shall endeavor to bring them out." Genius, moreover, is often associated with feelings of extreme sensibility, and cased in a physical frame of fragile mould. It is the part of humanity not to wound that sensibility; and of skill, to strengthen, by proper physical training, that frail bodily structure. How often has early genius been withered and blighted by the severity of the master, which would have grown and blossomed sweetly in the atmosphere of gentleness and love! And how many a youth of noblest promise has sunk prematurely into the grave, consumed by the intensity of his own intellectual fires, for want of that physical culture, which would have expanded his chest, invigorated his limbs, and sent more swiftly through his vitals the languid current!

We come, finally, to consider,

5. The value, to the teacher, of cultivated manners, and a knowledge of the world.

In the first place, I would desire the instructor of my children to have the manners of a gentleman, for *their sakes*; because I wish

them to have before them constantly a model which it is safe and proper for them to imitate, and because I wish to have them treated with that politeness and delicacy, which is to be expected only from the accomplished gentleman. On these points, I cannot but think that both parents and instructors are often at fault. The idea that children have any claim to be treated with politeness, seems never to have occurred to some; and yet how obvious it is, that this is the true way to soften their dispositions, and to refine their manners. Again, how ruthlessly do we sometimes see the delicacy of children wounded and crushed, until nature comes to their relief, blunting their sensibilities, and hardening their hearts! There is scarcely any particular in which the habits of the nursery and the school-room, appear to me to call more loudly for reform than this.

In the second place, I would wish the instructor of children, and youth, to have the manners of a gentleman, for *his own sake*, since there is no other way in which he can enjoy that respect and consideration in society, to which the inherent dignity of his employment, and his talents and learning, would justly entitle him.

But let us not close our eyes upon the faults to which the profession of the teacher is more or less subject, and against which, therefore, he has reason to guard himself. These faults, or foibles, are of two kinds; such as respect the mind itself, and such as respect the manners.

In the first place, the mind itself is in some danger of losing its strength and elasticity. As the intellectual powers are invigorated by the habitual contemplation of great objects, which constantly furnish it with new aliment, and new stimulus to thought, so they are weakened when exclusively confined to the constant reiteration of the simple elements of knowledge. In this process, not only is there wanting the stimulus of new and great ideas, but familiarity sometimes begets negligence; the grammarian of fifty may become less accurate and precise than the grammarian of thirty. I know of no remedy for this but to preserve the intellectual powers from such a tendency, by feeding them continually with what is new and great. Let the teacher of the simple rudiments of knowledge aim to be a scholar, in the largest sense, by expatiating in the wide fields of elegant literature, or in the higher walks of geometry or philosophy. There may, indeed, be some danger that the reiteration of the elements will become to him irksome and tasteless; but benevolence, an earnest desire for the improvement of his pupils, must preserve him from that. Again, the variety of elementary studies to which the preceptor of a large school is obliged to give his daily attention, has a tendency to debilitate the mind itself, and to leave it in so jaded a condition as to disqualify it for any high intellectual effort out of school. We can hardly propose an adequate remedy for this evil, except by changing the entire habits of society. Let the duties required of the preceptor be so reasonable as to allow him some opportunity to sustain the tone of his mind, and invigorate

its faculties; and let him have such assistance as will relieve him from cares so multifarious as to exhaust all mental vigor. In order to accomplish these desirable objects, a more ample pecuniary provision must be made for the support of elementary schools, if we expect to see them manned by teachers of those elevated accomplishments, which correspond, in any degree, to the standard we have been contemplating.

In the second place, there are faults of manners, against which the professional teacher has reason to guard himself. Common sense, more than learning, commands the respect of society. Common sense must be cultivated, by an habitual attention to the subjects of common life; and these, and not the learning of the schools, must form the medium of intercourse between the teacher and general society. Opportunities for travel are to be sought, and that intercourse with the best society, which tends to polish and refine the manners. The pedantry, or conceit, which is apt to be engendered by an exclusive intercourse with tyros, is to be prevented by an habitual intercourse with equals or superiors. The duties and privileges of the citizen must not be forgotten, nor merged in the character of the scholar. An intelligent interest in public affairs, and an ability to converse well upon these subjects in mixed society, and the actual discharge of such offices of the citizen, as may be compatible with the life of a teacher, will have no small tendency to dissipate the prejudices of the world against the profession, and to elevate it to the rank which clearly belongs to it among the learned professions.

The picture, which we have thus easily been able to place before our imagination, of the "perfect teacher," presents, indeed, a rare assemblage of virtues. It combines in one, scholarship, embracing a knowledge of one's own subject, both accurate and extensive, and a liberal acquaintance with all kindred subjects—intellectual qualities of a high order, implying a mind strong and clear, vigorous imagination, and taste characterized by both the *to prepon* and the *to kalon*, of the Greeks, comprising a nice perception of all that is fitting and proper, and a lively sensibility to whatever is beautiful in the classics, in the fine arts, and in the kingdoms of nature—moral qualities, established on the faith and benevolence of the Gospel, and flowing out in the effusions of a warm heart, and generous affections; with authority to command, united with discretion, and self-control—and, finally, those refined manners, and that knowledge of the world, which blend in one the scholar, the gentleman, and the citizen.

Formidable as this model may appear, some few names, at least, are on record which, in no mean degree, illustrate it; and it has been my happiness to know those whose accomplishments approximated to our ideal character. When thus adorned and dignified, how useful is the life in its meridian transit, now illustrious in old age! How well has he served his country who moulded, in childhood, or in youth, her lawyers, her orators, her statesmen, her physicians, her divines, her authors! Still,

the love of goodness, rather than of glory, will ever be the passion most appropriate to instructors; and they, in their approaches to the temple of fame, will ever be of that smallest tribe of suppliants who cry:—

Great idol of mankind! we neither claim
The praise of merit, nor aspire for fame!
'Tis all we beg thee, to conceal from sight
Those acts of goodness which themselves requite.
O let us still the secret joys partake,
To follow virtue, even for virtue's sake.

Literature and Science.

ELECTRICITY AND THE TIDES.

Newton's theory of the tides has been successfully opposed by several other theorists, who, if they did not establish their own hypotheses, effectually demolished that of their great predecessor. The ingenious and elegant St. Pierre, who ascribed the tides to the fusion of the polar ices, for which theory he founds a plausible, though fallacious argument upon a formidable array of facts, shows that Newton's theory cannot be true. Noah Webster, of whom his school books and dictionary are not the only foundations to the respect of posterity, after citing and endorsing St. Pierre's objections to Newton's theory, ascribes the tides to electricity, controlled by the sun and moon. We incline to Mr. Webster's theory till a better be offered.

The first objections against Newton's theory is the absence of tides in lakes and in inland seas, like the Mediterranean, Euxine and Baltic. If the moon can raise the water of the ocean, when opposite, why can it not raise that of a lake or inland sea, when in the same position? The second objection is that, if the moon's attraction cause the tides, they should be greatest at the equator, where the water is nearest to the moon. But they are greatest at the Poles, where the water is most distant from the moon, and least at the equator. The third objection is that, if the moon's attraction be the cause, tides would rise only on the earth's surface beneath the moon. But they also rise on the opposite side. Therefore, according to the theory, while the moon attracts the water more than the earth on one side, it attracts the earth more than the water on the other, which is contradictory.

Webster, in ascribing the tides to electricity, cites the following facts. First, the atmosphere, when free from vapor, is electric, and most electric when cold, and a conductor of caloric when heated. Hence the electricity of the atmosphere is least at the equator, and increases with distance from it; and in connection with this, the tides are highest at the poles, and diminish towards the equator. So the variations of the barometer are least at the equator and greatest at the poles. So twilight is shortest at the equator and longest at the poles. So the Aurora Borealis, or visible streams of electricity, are never visible at the equator, and most distinct at the pole. So the variations of the atmosphere in electricity, weight and density are least at the equator and greatest at the poles.

These, and many other facts, showing that the electric influence increased towards the poles, led Webster to the conclusion, that, the expansion and contraction of the ocean producing tides, was an electric phenomenon.

We would here suggest an analogy. Believing, as we do, that electricity is the universal vital principle—the motive power of all organisms, from the whole solar system down to the lowest organism on or within each planet or satellite—we can perceive an analogy between the tides and other organic motions that are attributable to electricity.

All vital motions are alternate expansions and contractions. Thus the lungs expand and contract, through the agency of electricity, taken in the form of oxygen. Thus the heart does the same through the same agency, acting upon the blood. What is the perigee and apogee of the moon, but the contraction and expansion of their distances? What is the perihelion and aphelion of the sun but the same? To all these motions, which we ascribe to electricity, we see an analogy in the tides; and therefore we regard the tides as the respiration, the systole and diastole of the earth. We suggest this for the consideration of the scientific.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

HEAT A COMPOUND OF ELECTRICITY.

A writer in the *N. Y. Medical and Surgical Reporter* advances the following theory:

It is a well known fact, that in the operation of the galvanic battery, heat is produced at the point where the wires from the opposite poles of the battery meet; that is, at the point where the two electricities meet and are neutralized. We find in our experiments, the positive or vitreous electricity passing one wire, and the negative or resinous, the other, in an opposite direction. They meet, and at the point of union we find heat. This heat cannot be produced by friction, for it is much greater than has ever been derived from this source. When charcoal is placed between the poles of a powerful battery, it produces the greatest heat ever known. From what is this heat derived? It is too great to ascribe to the combustion of the charcoal. To what conclusion can we come? I can suggest no explanation, except that heat is a compound of the two electricities as they approach each other. They unite, and what do you find at the place of union? Caloric. What better evidence can we have, that heat is a compound substance, composed of the two electricities.

LAVOISIER proved water to be a compound of oxygen and hydrogen, by uniting the two gases and producing water. In the same manner, we prove heat to be a compound of the two electricities, by uniting and producing heat.

As a further evidence of this theory, it may be mentioned, that when the poles of a battery, instead of wires are connected by chains, the alternate links of which are composed of good and bad conductors, the bad conductor becomes hot, while the good remains comparatively cold. What is the cause of this? The two electricities are checked in their progress through the bad conductors, and they unite and form heat. I know of no explanation of this fact on any other theory.

District School Journal.

S. S. RANDALL, EDITOR.

ALBANY, JULY, 1846.

COMMON SCHOOL STATE CONVENTION.

Our limits restrict us to a very brief notice of the proceedings of this body, which convened at the State-street Baptist Church in this city on the 12th of May last, and adjourned on the 15th, after a session of four days. A full and accurate report of the resolutions and debates, reports of committees, &c. has been given to the public through the columns of the *Teachers' Advocate*; and we shall endeavor to find room from time to time, as we can, for such portions as we may deem of most interest to our readers. Several of the most eminent and distinguished educationists of the United States were present during nearly the entire session of the convention, and the subjects considered and discussed were exceedingly interesting and important. The Hon. HORACE MANN, Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts; HORACE EATON, Superintendent of Common Schools of Vermont; THEODORE F. KING, Superintendent of New-Jersey, and NATHANIEL S. BENTON, Superintendent of New-York, participated in the proceedings to a greater or less extent; and able and interesting addresses were delivered before the convention by each of them, with the exception of Dr. KING, who was compelled by illness to leave the city on the second day of the session.

The Convention was called to order at 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning, (12th) by Dr. WILLARD, of Albany, who on motion of Mr. WRIGHT, of Washington, took the chair temporarily—Mr. COOPER, of Onondaga, editor of the *Teacher's Advocate*, officiating as Secretary. The following persons were then elected as permanent officers of the Convention.

President,

S. S. RANDALL,

Vice-Presidents.

WILLIAM WRIGHT, of Washington.

SEABURY ALLEN, of Saratoga.]

Secretaries.

EDWARD COOPER, of Onondaga,

WORTHY PUTNAM, of Chautauque.

The rules and orders of the last Convention having been adopted, the counties were called over, and forty superintendents answered to their names. The roll having been again called

for resolutions, several members brought forward for the consideration of the convention, such subjects as they deemed expedient for discussion and deliberation, and these were subsequently taken up in their order, and action had upon them. Committees were then announced upon the various educational topics ordinarily requiring examination through this medium: and after making the subject of **FREE SCHOOLS**, a special order for the ensuing morning, and discussing a few topics brought up for consideration, the convention took a recess until evening.

In the evening Mr. MANN, in accordance with previous invitation, delivered an able and eloquent lecture on the general topic of Education before the convention and a numerous and gratified auditory.

On Wednesday morning, the convention took up the special order—the practicability and expediency of engrafting the Free School system, upon our existing organization, through the action of the State Convention for the revival of the Constitution. Mr. MANN, being called upon for that purpose, gave a lucid and comprehensive exposition of the system of Free Schools, as it exists in Massachusetts; a full report of which, as furnished by himself for the Teacher's Advocate, will be found in another portion of our paper, and to which we need not invite the special attention of all our readers.

Mr. MANN was followed on the same side by Messrs. WILKINS and THOMPSON of Rensselaer, MACK of Rochester, WILLARD of Albany, DUBOIS of Ulster, COOPER of Onondaga, HENRY of Herkimer, and THOMPSON of Cayuga, who contended, in substance, that the time for engrafting the system of free schools upon our existing organization had fully come: that public sentiment in nearly every section of the State was prepared to sustain and adopt it; that its recognition as a part of our fundamental law, would not only relieve trustees and other officers of school districts of the oppressive and periodical burdens under which they are now compelled to labor in the assessment and collection of taxes and rate-bills—in their constant and almost unavoidable liability to vexatious and protracted litigation, without the possibility of adequate remuneration for their time and expenses, even if ultimately successful, and in the gratuitous devotion of so large a portion of their time, and frequently their means, to the fiscal affairs of their respective districts—but would bring within the fostering influences of the schools,

hundreds, if not thousands, of indigent children, the claims of whose parents or guardians to exemption under the present system were either overlooked or disregarded, and who consequently were virtually deprived of those inestimable privileges, which the beneficence of the State designed to secure to every child within its borders, however humble the condition, or restricted the pecuniary means of his parents. The paramount duty and obligation of the State, thus to afford to each of its future citizens, without distinction or discrimination, the amplest facilities for a sound and comprehensive mental and moral education, were strongly insisted upon, and clearly and fully demonstrated; the superior advantages of the Free School system, wherever it had been introduced within the State, as at Rochester, Buffalo, New-York, Williamsburgh, Brooklyn, Poughkeepsie, Hudson, Utica and other places, pointed out and elucidated, and the importance of present action, in view of the pending re-organization of our frame of government, forcibly and eloquently urged.

On the other hand, Messrs. WRIGHT of Washington, ALLEN of Saratoga, TERHUNE of Greene, ROBERTSON of Tompkins, and others, while conceding to its fullest extent, the principle that the schools throughout the State should be free—open to all without discrimination and without direct charge, and supported by the taxable property and resources of the community, doubted the expediency of a radical change in the existing organization, in this respect, at the present time—and contended that however sound in theory and desirable in practice, such a change might be, the public sentiment was not prepared for it—that its merits had not, as yet, been generally or sufficiently discussed; and that by insisting upon its adoption, under such circumstances, the most imminent danger might accrue to the system as it now exists. They contended that the whole subject might safely be referred to the good sense and sound judgment of the people and their representatives, who, in due season, would not fail to demand the adoption of the system of Free schools, either as a substitute for, or an addition to, the existing organization.

The several propositions were, at the close of the debate on Wednesday morning, referred to a select committee, to digest and report a series of resolutions for the action of the convention.

At three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, the convention, in a body, visited the State

Normal School, where after an interesting lecture from the Principal, Mr. PAGE, to the pupils of that institution, on "The Personal Habits of the Teacher," a series of eloquent and impressive extemporaneous addresses were delivered by Prof. DAVIES, JACOB ABBOT, HORACE MANN, and JAMES HENRY, Jr. Esq. and the members separated deeply impressed with the practical value and importance of this great nursery of Common School Teachers.

In the evening, the convention and a crowded auditory listened to a well-written and eminently practical lecture on "Physiology as a branch of Common School Education," by the Hon. HORACE EATON, Superintendent, and formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Vermont. We were not so fortunate as to procure a copy of this exceedingly valuable lecture for publication, which we however hope to publish in our next number; and we are confident our readers will not regret the space it will occupy in our columns, in view of the interesting nature of the subject, and the ability with which it is discussed. Governor EATON, in his short visit to our State, by his free and unassuming intercourse with the representatives from its various sections in the Convention, and by the deep interest manifested by him in the cause of popular education, won "golden opinions" from all who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance; and we renewedly congratulate our fellow-laborers in this great cause, in Vermont, on their good fortune in having secured his valuable services as Superintendent.

On Thursday morning Mr. COOPER, from the select committee to which had been referred the various resolutions and propositions relative to the adoption of the free school system, brought in a report which, after a renewed discussion by Messrs. MANN of Massachusetts, HARRINGTON, VALENTINE and WILLARD of Albany, COOPER of Onondaga, ROBERTSON of Tompkins, DENMAN of Wyoming, and WRIGHT of Washington, was amended, on the motion of the latter gentleman, and finally adopted by a majority of more than two-thirds of the County Superintendents present, as follows:

"Whereas, the system of Free Schools as adopted by Massachusetts and by several of the large cities and towns of this and other States, has been found by the practical experience of years to work well—securing a more general and punctual attendance of scholars—awakening a more widely extended and deeper interest in the minds of the great mass of the people in the success of our primary nurseries of education, thereby ensuring the elevation of the standard of Common School Instruction, and more

widely diffusing the inestimable blessing of a sound and generous education; therefore,

Resolved, That this convention, fully impressed with the importance of the various considerations involved in this question of *Free Schools*, and believing that it is one that will sooner or later receive the approbation of all, do most respectfully commend the subject to the calm and dispassionate consideration of the sovereign people of this State, and to the favorable notice of the members of the convention about to assemble to revise the constitution of the State.

Resolved, That a certified copy of the above Preamble and Resolution be presented to the presiding officer of the convention referred to, with the request that the same may be laid before that honorable body for their consideration."

On Thursday evening Mr. AUGUSTUS F. BOYLE of Boston delivered an interesting and practical lecture on the new science of Phonography and Phonotypy.

On Friday morning, the Hon. N. S. BENTON, State Superintendent, on the invitation of the convention, addressed its members substantially as follows:

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Convention:

When the time and place for holding your annual meeting was changed, and fixed to be holden in this city, I had, with much confidence and pleasure, anticipated such a release from official service and duty, imposed by law upon the Secretary of State, as to have been with you continually, from the commencement to the close of this very interesting session—a meeting which was to have witnessed the results of another annual ordeal which our common school system seems doomed to undergo, in the efforts to effect changes that I am bound to believe are intended to produce benefit rather than any injurious tendencies. But, I must frankly say, it appears to me, no reflecting mind, fully acquainted with the operations of the present system, and the beneficial results which have thus far attended it, can look upon it without feeling the deepest apprehensions and fearful forebodings of the future. If the youth of our State are to be educated, and this is a point about which I apprehend there can be no differences of opinion, we must all allow that the sooner each one of them is prepared to enter upon the high and important duties of life, then will their parents, guardians, and the State have best discharged their obligations to each other and to society. And although I do not design to enter into any discussion of the merits or demerits of any particular method of popular education now ex'ant, we surely may be permitted to search out and test the most approved, and collect, arrange and promulgate information touching this most interesting subject, and I cannot hesitate one moment in expressing my decided and entire conviction, that no better method can now be adopted to accomplish these important results than the agency of intelligent and assiduous County Superintendents. But what will the most perfect systems of imparting useful knowledge avail, if we have not *masters* to teach and *pupils* to learn? Nothing, I say, nothing. Hence the great importance of awakening and directing public attention to the subject; and who will not admit the great advantage of a young person being fully qualified in respect to education, to discharge all the duties of life he or she may choose

to assume, as soon as the physical powers of the body shall be properly matured, rather than waste the prime of life in pursuits more difficult to be accomplished as age progresses!

It appears to me that one fact, to be ascertained from the published documents of the Department, is alone sufficient to establish the great importance of the system of County supervision and inspection. From the year 1815 to 1841, the average number of children instructed during each year, but very little exceeded the numbers reported between the ages of five and sixteen years, while the average number instructed since the law providing for the appointment of County Superintendents went into effect, or for three years past, has for each year, exceeded the number reported, by 10,049. Now why this great change and no unimportant increase of attendance of children at our common schools, for the purposes of instruction, except through the impetus given by the County Supervision and inspection. This increase began, as soon as the Superintendents entered the field of labor.

But gentlemen, my time is limited, and I am called to other duties by the stern injunctions of the law. I desired a full, free and frank interchange of opinions with you all in regard to the practical workings of our system, to hear and note your suggestions, that the department might, where the subject came within the discretionary powers vested in it, apply such remedies as would tend to remove difficulties, if any, and produce harmonious action. In this I have failed, not, however, for any cause within my control, and much, very much I assure you do I regret it.

Before I proceed farther, allow me to tender to you my grateful acknowledgments for the honor you have done me, by inviting my attendance here, through a committee of your body. Highly as I appreciated that compliment, I was, at the time, unable to accompany the committee, and I most sincerely hope the excuse tendered was satisfactory to every member of the convention. The brief time allowed me on this occasion will not permit any thing more than allusion to one or two topics more connected with the duties of our positions; and no one except those attached to the Department, and who supervise its correspondence, can fully appreciate the difficulties growing out of the changes and alterations of school districts, and fixing the sites for school houses.

The trustees of school districts have, in some instances, adopted the practice of drawing all the public money apportioned for the current year and applying it to the payment of Teachers' wages for the past, and thus leaving their districts wholly destitute of the means for paying the expenses of tuition for the current year, except what may be realized from the rate-bills. This, in my judgment, is not in accordance with law; but aside from this, it is very objectionable in other respects. The apportionment is made in the month of April each year, upon an enumeration of the number of children between the ages of five and sixteen years, taken at the close of the preceding year, and it is for the benefit of the children then in the district that this money is apportioned. The Department has found it necessary to give directions to the Town Superintendents that the public moneys can only be applied to payment of Teachers' wages for the winter and summer terms of the current year in which the public moneys are apportioned; that is the winter term preceding, and the summer term succeeding, the time of the apportionment; assuming that the winter terms generally will have been closed by the month of April. The object is to embrace the two terms commencing and closing nearest to the time the apportionment takes place. It is obvious then that any changes or alterations

of the boundaries of school districts which will transfer the inhabitants, having children to educate within the prescribed ages, from one district to another, and to take effect before the close of the second or summer term, will work manifest wrong and injustice, for that year, not only to the inhabitants transferred, but to the people of the district to which they may be annexed; because those who are cut off, lose all benefit of the money appropriated to their use, and a burthen is thrown upon the district receiving the annexation, especially in cases where there are exempted scholars. I have desired to call your attention to this subject, with a view that you might, in your conferences and consultations with the Town Superintendents, so advise them as to produce results in harmony with the views which I have now expressed, and I entertain no doubt whatever that the most appropriate period for making such alterations, will be after the close of the second or summer term, and before the trustees take the enumeration preparatory for their reports. The changes or alterations should take effect between those periods.

I wish to ask your attention to one other subject before I leave you, and that is the organization of joint districts, comprising territory of two or more towns in the same county, and of towns in different counties. During the last year the number of whole districts, as compared with the preceding, has decreased thirty, while the joint districts have increased eighty-five. Now there may be a necessity and a propriety for organizing joint districts in many instances, but that this necessity should be so pervading as to make it proper to organize so many parts as now exist (5311) I can not easily bring my mind to believe. On this point I may be mistaken, and I invite your attention to it as one worthy of your serious observation. The proportion of non-reporting districts is much greater from the joint than the whole districts, owing, I fear, in too many instances, to inattention on the part of those whose duty it is to make them, and the labor of making returns for each part. The Town Superintendents can do much to promote uniformity in these respects, and I trust with your counsel and advice, will see to it that joint districts will not be further multiplied than may be strictly necessary for the accommodation of the people, and to afford ample opportunities for public instruction. The Department has heretofore given liberal indulgence, as to time, in the transmission of the returns required by law and the regulations adopted by the Superintendent, of the county officers, and although every disposition to consult the convenience of others is still entertained, yet as that indulgence has been found to produce considerable embarrassment it will hereafter be expected that the required returns will be promptly transmitted by the first of October, in order that the annual report may be prepared and sent in at the opening of the Legislative Session. The statistical reports required from you, cannot or do not embrace all the districts in your respective counties, owing no doubt, in many instances, to the impossibility of your visiting and examining every district in the county or division twice in each year; with a view of procuring complete statistical returns. I contemplate furnishing the Town Superintendents with suitable blanks for the purpose, and requiring those officers to make reports to you of all the information acquired on this head. I regard this as very essential so long as any reports of this sort are required.

From the indications at the recent session of the Legislature, it is quite probable that your special reports will not be found among the legislative documents of the session hereafter; I would still invite their continuance so far as you may find it

convenient to give them. Let them embrace such useful information as may be available to the Department, and especially let each county officer give the whole number of appeals decided during the year.

Although I have much more to say to you on this interesting subject, I must now take my leave, confiding in the talent, integrity, and indomitable perseverance which has hitherto so fully characterized your own efforts and those of your predecessors, and trusting that the high mission in which you are now embarked will produce results eminently beneficial to the people of our noble State, and the permanent welfare of our common country.

The following resolutions were offered and unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this convention be cordially tendered to Hon. N. S. Benton for the valuable remarks with which he has favored us this morning, and that we regard the reasons assigned by him for his limited attendance at the convention as abundantly satisfactory; and that the unfeigned regrets of all the members that the complicated duties of his office as Secretary of State, should have deprived the convention of his presence and counsel during every movement of its session, are hereby presented him.

On motion of Prof. J. B. THOMSON,

Resolved, That the District School Journal and Teachers' Advocate, merit the thanks of this convention for their fidelity and untiring efforts to advance the cause of popular education; and that we most heartily commend them to that liberal patronage of teachers, superintendents and parents throughout the State which they so richly deserve.

The following preamble and resolutions were offered by Mr. WOODIN of Columbia and unanimously adopted.

Whereas, The late Francis Dwight was, in our esteem, an indefatigable and devoted agent in the cause of popular education and moral improvement, ever wakeful to the best interests of the present and rising generations, kind and courteous in manners, gentle and generous of heart, and ready and capable of instruction.

And whereas, he was an attendant at each and all the State Conventions of County Superintendents to mingle his counsels, and cheer the onward course of moral and mental improvement, and cheering his weary co-workers in the cause in which he was heartily engaged, with hopes of future success, Therefore,

Resolved, That it was with deep and heartfelt grief that we heard the melancholy tidings of his death, and that we mingle our sorrows with the thousands of the relations and friends who have been visited with a severance of the dearest ties, and with the loss of a warm and untiring friend in his death.

Resolved, That in his death, the cause of popular education has lost an efficient and untiring agent, the rising generation a guardian and advocate, and morality and virtue a worthy support and example; that his absence from us on this occasion of our annual meeting fills us with sadness, and that we will ever retain the fondest recollection of his friendly and useful presence written upon our hearts as a memento and just tribute of his worth.

Resolved, That when we contrast his present rest in the grave, with his living usefulness

when with us, we are strongly admonished of the uncertainty of life, and the propriety of tempering our instruction to youth in the performance of our official duties, and directing our own lives by the lesson drawn from his early departure.

J. Washington Taylor, (late Principal of Cherry Valley Academy,) after a brief eulogy upon the life and character of Mr. Dwight, moved an amendment, that a copy of the resolutions be presented to his bereaved family.

The convention finally adjourned, after a laborious and mutually satisfactory session of four days, to meet again at the village of GENEVA, on the last Tuesday of April next.

MR. MANN'S SPEECH.

Mr. MANN being specially requested by a resolution of the convention, to address them on the subject of a Free School system, arose, and spoke substantially as follows:

Mr. President—It would be ungracious in me to decline compliance with a request, so complementary to myself, or rather to the State of Massachusetts, of which I am a public servant. I had not expected, however, to be called upon, either at this time, or in this manner; and hence I must urge the excuse of being unprepared, so far as a man may ever permit himself to be found unprepared, on a question pertaining to the duties of his office.

Strange as it may seem, the subject of Free Schools, and of the right of a State to maintain them, is never agitated in Massachusetts. I recollect no public document in which this question is discussed; nor have I ever been present at a meeting where it was debated. It is a thing universally taken for granted, and probably there is not a gentleman present, who has not thought more upon the subject than I have. If there be any such thing as innate ideas, we, in Massachusetts, are born with an innate idea of Free Schools; and a citizen with us would be as much surprised, at having a rate-bill presented to him for the attendance of his children at the district school, as he would if called upon to pay for enjoying the free light of the sun, or the common air of heaven. To argue this question, therefore, would seem almost like arguing a question respecting the existence of an instinct; you may prove with ever so much logical force that it does not exist, but when you have finished your demonstration, there it is.

In this State, however, and in most other States of our Union, and countries of the world, Free Schools are unknown. A fund may exist, a small tax may be levied upon property; but the residue of the cost of the school must be paid by those who send their children to it, and in proportion to the time of their attendance.

The resolution before us contemplates the prospective establishment of a system of Free Schools for the State of New-York; and I acknowledge that when any new measure is propounded, the burden of proof rests upon those who ask for the change.

I will take up but a single point pertaining to this great subject, for, surrounded as I am, by gentlemen both willing and able to discuss it in all its bearings, I should deem myself inexcusable were I to anticipate, by a few cursory remarks, the points which ought to be presented and expounded in detail. I confine myself to a single point, namely, the obligation of a State, on the

great principles of natural law and natural equity, to maintain Free Schools, for the universal education of its people; and I think the convention for turning my attention to this point, which was never before so distinctly presented to my mind.

¶ Shall the schools of a State be free? shall they be open to all? shall they invite and welcome all? shall they provide that amount and quality of instruction for all, which is indispensable to the welfare of the individual—to the brother, sister, father, mother—to the voter in municipal affairs; to the juror, witness and citizen; to one who by law, inherits a portion of the sovereignty of this great Republic? I propose to discuss the question, whether, according to the great, immutable principles of natural law and equity, this shall be done; or whether, on the other hand, each child shall be dependent for the education he may obtain, upon chance or charity or parental providence; and whether, if chance does not favor, nor charity smile, nor parents provide, the child shall be left without education, until he provides for himself. Sir, it appears to me that a child born in winter, may as well be left without warmth or shelter until he provides it for himself.

Were it not that the question of Free Schools involves the question of taxation, I suppose that but few would feel any objection against them; and still fewer, in the face of this community, and in the increasing light and liberality of the nineteenth century, would avow their objections. He must be a pretty bold man, who, at this day, in New-England or New-York, would resist the utmost diffusion of educational means. Such resistance, at the present time, strongly suggests the ideas of a distempered intellect and of hospital treatment. But Free Schools imply taxation: and it is a problem which no statesman has ever yet been able to solve, how to make taxes agreeable to all who pay them. Taxation has always been one of the characteristics of arbitrary power, and hence republicans are jealous of it. Taxation was one of the main causes for colonial resistance to the authority of Great Britain; and hence an aversion to it seems to run in our blood. I have always observed amongst our people, an exaggeration of ideas on this subject,—a feeling in each individual, whatever the amount of the tax may be, that he will have to pay the whole of it. It is the hydrostatic paradox repeated, where the whole pressure bears upon each part. And hence it is, that those who will admit that a thorough, comprehensive and christian education,—an education of all our faculties and susceptibilities of body and mind,—is the equivalent of health and long life, of individual, social and national happiness, prosperity and renown; nay, that education good or bad, is the synonyme of heaven and hell: I say, those who admit all this, still maintain that each family must pay for its own; they say, that, come prosperity, or come adversity, to the individual or to the community, come honor or come infamy, come blessedness or come perdition, every man must pay for himself. The knot of this unwedgeable problem lies in the word *pay*. "Why should I who have no children," says one, "pay to educate yours?" "Why should I?" says another, "who have reared a family of children and educated them, now pay a second time, in order to educate yours; thus leaving a double burden?"

Now, in the first place, I am no apologist for unnecessary taxation. But it does not follow because despots make grievous exactions of their subjects, that citizens or voters will overtax themselves.—The latter have the power of restriction in their own hands, and can pronounce a peremptory veto whenever they please.

Again, taxation for judicious and worthy ob-

jects, is not to be considered a burden, but only as the common condition of existence. We cannot enjoy life, nor even subsist, without expenditure. Our daily food, our shelter, our raiment, are taxes—each man being his own assessor. In a wisely administered government, taxes are the fares which we pay in railroad cars—the price for being safely carried and well provided for, through the journey of life.

In the next place, it seems to me obvious that all objections to taxation for the support of Free Schools derive their plausibility from the fact that they are made by an individual, in his individual character,—as an isolated, solitary being, having no relations with the community around him, having no ancestors to whom he himself is indebted, and as one, also, who is to leave no posterity having a claim upon him. In the midst of a populous community to which he is bound by innumerable ties, having had his own fortune and condition almost predetermined and foreordained by his predecessors, and being about to exert upon others as commanding an influence as has been exerted upon himself, the objector argues with us, just as he would argue, if there were only himself and his family on the western continent, and one other man and one other family on the eastern continent, and they and their families were the first and the last of the whole race. The arguments generally used by men against taxation for Free Schools are applicable only to such a case as this. Well, sir, if there were but one family in this hemisphere, and one other family in the other hemisphere, and if the head of one of these families should call upon the other to help educate his children, I admit that,—except so far as good neighborhood might be concerned,—there would be some soundness in such an objection; and I can conceive that the force of the appeal would be even more diminished, if a single family on a neighboring planet should make such an appeal to a single family on this planet. In self-defence, or in selfishness, one might say to the other, "What are your fortunes to me? You can neither molest nor assist me. Please to keep your own side of the oceanic or of the planetary spaces that divide us."

But is this the relation that we sustain towards each other? Has not every member of the community thousands around him, on whom he acts, and who are continually reacting upon him? Have we not all derived advantages from our ancestors, and are we not bound, as by an oath, to transmit these advantages, even in an improved condition, to our posterity? In this age of the world, in the present condition of society, no man can sink into his individuality, and sever the relations which bind him to society. The mind and heart must be enlarged, until they become co-extensive with our enlarged relations. The individual no longer exists as an individual merely, but as a citizen among citizens; as a descendant of those who have gone before, as the ancestor of those who are to follow; and hence as the recipient of great blessings from the one, and the medium and transmitter of those blessings to the other. From these new relations, new duties are evolved. Society must be preserved, and in order to preserve it, we must not look merely to what one family needs, but to what the whole community needs; not merely to what one generation needs, but to the wants of a succession of generations. To draw conclusions without considering these facts, is to leave out the most important part of our premises.

Now what is the fundamental, the paramount, indispensable need and necessity of a people? I say it is Education, though deficient in every thing else,—though weak, impoverished, anarchical,—

yet education will give strength, competency and order; though abounding in every thing that heart can desire, yet take away education, and all things will rush to ruin, as quickly as the solar system would return to chaos if gravitation and cohesion were destroyed. We need laws regulating all the rights of property, of person and of character. We need freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of conscience. For these purposes, we must have wise legislators; but we never shall have wise legislators with a foolish constituency.

If education then be the most important interest of society, it must be placed upon the most permanent and immovable basis that society can supply. It should not be founded upon the shifting sands of popular caprice or passion, or upon individual benevolence; but if there be a rock any where, it should be founded upon that rock.

What is the most permanent basis?—that which survives all changes, which retains its identity amid all vicissitudes. It is property,—I mean the great, common, universal elements which constitute the basis of all property, the riches of the soil, the treasures of the sea, the light and warmth of the sun, the fertilizing clouds and streams and dews, the winds, the electric and vegetating agencies of nature. Individuals come and go, but these great bounties of heaven abide. Individual estates expand into opulence or shrink into poverty; but the munificence of heaven is as enduring as time.

We hear much said, not merely in courts of law, but in the marts of business and in the common speech of men, of the *rights of property*. Would it not be refreshing to hear something of the *rights of men*? Have not men rights as well as property? Were men made for the property, or the property for men? It is of some consequence to know which is principal, and which is adjunct or accessory. As I read the sacred pages, *men*,—not any one man, not any one generation,—but the race, were to have “dominion” over all other created things.

Now I wish to examine, for a moment, this question; *how much, what quality and description* of ownership, any one man, or any one generation can have in the natural, substantive, enduring elements of wealth; in the soil; in metals and minerals; in precious stones, and in more precious coal and iron and granite; in the sun, the winds and the waters. Has any one man, or any one generation, I ask, such an absolute ownership in these ingredients of all wealth, that his right is invaded when a portion of them is taken for the benefit of contemporaries and of posterity? I reply, certainly not. The earth and the fullness thereof were created for the race collectively. These were not created for Adam alone, nor for Noah alone, nor for the first discoverers or colonists who may have found or have peopled any part of the earth's ample domain. No! They were created for all, but to be possessed and enjoyed in succession. Each generation, subject to certain modifications for the encouragement of industry and frugality, has only a life-lease in them. There are reasonable regulations in regard to the out-going and in-coming tenants,—regulations which allow the in-coming generations to anticipate a little, their full right to possession, and which also allow to the out-going generations a brief control of their property after they are called to leave it. Let me illustrate this great principle of natural law by a reference to some of the unstable elements in regard to which the property of each individual is strongly qualified. Take the streams of water, or the winds for example. A stream as it descends from its sources to its mouth, is successively the property of all those through whose lands it passes. My neighbor who lives above me owned it yesterday, while

it was passing through his lands; I own it to-day, while it is descending through mine, and the contiguous proprietor below will own it to-morrow while it is flowing through his, as it passes onward to the next. But the rights of each successive owner are not absolute and unqualified. They are limited by the rights of those who are entitled to subsequent possession. While a stream of water is passing through my demesnes, I cannot corrupt it, so that it shall be valueless or offensive to the adjoining proprietor below. I cannot detain it, in its downward course, or divert it into some other direction so that it shall leave its channel dry. I may use it for various purposes,—for agriculture, as in watering cattle or irrigating lands; for manufactures, as in turning wheels, &c.—but in all my uses of it, I must have regard to the rights of my neighbors lower down; so no two proprietors, nor any half dozen proprietors by conspiring together, can deprive an owner who lives below them all, of the ultimate rights which he has to the use of the stream in its descending course. So we see here, that a man has rights, rights of which he cannot be divested without his own consent,—in a stream of water, before it reaches the limits of his estate,—at which latter point he may, somewhat emphatically call it his own. And in this sense, a man who lives at the outlet of a river, on the margin of the ocean, has certain unqualified rights in the fountains that well up from the earth at the distance of thousands of miles.

So it is with the ever-moving winds. No man has a permanent interest in the breezes that blow by him, and cool and refresh him as they blow.—Every man has a temporary interest in them.—From which quarter of the compass they may come, I have a right to use them as they are sweeping by; yet I must use them in reference to those other participants and co-owners whom they are moving forward to bless. It is not lawful, therefore, for me to corrupt them; to load them with noxious gases or vapors, by which they will prove valueless or detrimental to him, whoever he may be, towards whom they are moving.

In one respect, the winds illustrate our relative rights and duties, even better than the streams.—In the latter case, the rights are not only successive, but always in the same order of priority,—those of the owner above necessarily preceding those of the owner below; and this order is unchangeable except by changing the ownership of the land itself to which the rights are appurtenant. But in the case of the winds which blow from every quarter of the heavens, I may have the prior right to-day, and with a change in their direction, my neighbor may have it to-morrow. If therefore to-day, when the wind is descending from me to him, I should usurp the right to use it to his detriment; to-morrow, when it is coming from him to me, he might inflict retributive usurpation upon me.

The light of the sun, too, is subject to the same benign and equitable laws. As this ethereal element passes by me, I have a right to bask in its beams, or to employ its quickening powers. But I have no right, even on my own land, to build up a wall mountain high, that shall eclipse the sun to my neighbor's eyes.

Now all these great principles of natural law to which I have adverted, are incorporated into, and constitute a part of the civil law of every civilized people; and they are obvious and simple illustrations of the great proprietary laws, by which individuals and generations hold their rights in the solid substance of the globe, and in the elements that move over its surface. As successive owners on a river's banks have equal rights to the

waters that flow through their respective desmesnes, subject only to the modification that the proprietors near the stream's source, must have precedence in the enjoyment of their rights over those lower down; so the rights of all the generations of mankind to the earth itself, to the streams that fertilize it, to the winds that bless it, and to the reviving light, are common rights, subject to similar modifications in regard to preceding and succeeding generations. They did not belong to our ancestors in perpetuity; they do not belong to us in perpetuity; and the right of the next generation in them will be limited and defensible like ours. As we hold them subject to their claims, so will they hold them subject to the claims of their successors to the end of time. Yes, sir, the savage tribes that roam about the head springs of the Mississippi, have as good a right to ordain what use shall be made of its copious waters, when in their grand descent across a continent, they shall reach the shores of arts and civilization, as any of our predecessors had, or as we ourselves have, to say what shall be done in perpetuity, with the soil, the waters, the winds, the light, the great electrical and vegetative powers of nature, which on all hands must be allowed to constitute the indispensable elements of wealth.

I say then, that no man, however he may have acquired his property, has any natural right, any more than he has a moral one, to hold it, or to dispose of it, irrespective of the needs and claims of those, who, in the august procession of the generations, are to succeed him on this stage of existence. Holding his rights subject to their rights, he is bound to make provision for their highest wants.

Generation after generation comes from the creative energy of God. Each one stops for a brief period upon the earth, resting only as for a night, like migratory birds upon their passage, and then leave it forever to others, whose existence is as transitory as their own; and the flocks of water fowl which annually sweep across our latitudes in their passage to another clime, have as good a right to make a perpetual appropriation to their own use, of the lands over which they fly, as any one generation has to arrogate perpetual dominion and sovereignty for their own purposes, of that portion of the earth which it is their fortune to occupy during their brief temporal existence.

There is another consideration which bears upon this arrogant doctrine of absolute ownership or sovereignty. A man says, is not my property the result of my own earnings, or have I not inherited it by virtue of standing laws, from those who did earn it? I reply that this is not strictly true. For every unit that a man earns by his own labor or ingenuity, he receives hundreds and thousands from the All-bountiful giver. What would be the product of cotton plantations or wheat fields, did not heaven send down upon them its dews, its rains, its warmth and light? It is said that from eighty to ninety per cent of some of the great staple productions of agriculture come from the air and not from the earth. Hence those productions might more properly be called fruits of the atmosphere than of the soil. They are the perpetual riches which heaven sends to man, and the winds are made instrumental in equalizing the distribution. How much would the manufacturer earn were it not for the waters which God causes ceaselessly to flow; or for the mechanical force which He, and not we, has given to steam; and how would the commerce of the world be carried on, were it not for the great laws of nature, of electricity, of heat, of condensation, of rarefaction, which give birth to the winds, that, in conformity to His will, and not in obedience to any power of man, are continually

traversing the earth?—These references show how much of the wealth, which men presumptuously call their own, because they claim to have earned it, is poured into their lap unasked and unthanked for, by the Being so infinitely in his physical as well as his moral riches.

But the present wealth of the world has an additional element in it. Much of all that is capable of being earned by man, has been earned by our predecessors, and has come down to us from them in a consolidated and enduring form. We have not built all the houses in which we live, nor all the roads on which we travel, nor all the ships by which we navigate. But even if we had, whence came all the arts and sciences, the discoveries and the inventions, without which, and without a common right to which, the valuation of the property of a whole nation would scarcely equal the inventory of a single man. Whence came a knowledge of agriculture without which we should have nothing to reap; or a knowledge of astronomy, without which we could not traverse the oceans; or a knowledge of chemistry and mechanical philosophy, without which the arts and trades cannot flourish? Most of these were prepared by those who have gone before us, some of them have come down from a remote antiquity. Surely all these boons and blessings belong as much to our posterity as to ourselves. They have not descended to us to be arrested and consumed here, or to be sequestered from the ages to come.

These considerations limit still more extensively that absolutism of ownership which is so often claimed by the possessors of wealth.

But now we come to another stage in the argument. In regard to the wealth formed from the great substantive ingredients which are the property of all mankind, and which belong equally to successive generations, subject only to the condition that the use by one generation must necessarily precede that of another—in regard to this wealth, I say, at what time is it to be transferred from a preceding to a succeeding generation?—At what point are the latter to take possession of, or to derive benefit from it, and the earlier to relinquish it? Is each existing generation, and each individual of an existing generation, to hold fast to his possessions until death relaxes his grasp; or is something of the transfer and the benefit to be yielded beforehand? Is it not obvious that the latter is the true and the only alternative? If the in-coming generation have no rights until the outgoing generation have retired, then is every individual that enters the world doomed to perish on the day he is born. According to the very constitution of things, each individual must derive sustenance and succor from society, as soon as his eyes open to the light, or his lungs are inflated by the air. His wants cannot be delayed until he himself can supply them. The demands of his nature must be answered, before he can provide for them; either by the performance of labor or by any exploits of skill. The infant must be fed before he can earn his bread; he must be clothed before he can prepare garments; and it is just as clear that he must be instructed before he can engage a teacher. Our laws do not allow a child to make a valid contract before he is twenty-one years of age; but any individual may supply and minor with necessities, and such supply constitutes a legal claim against the parent, guardian, or other person, bound, as the law expresses it, to provide for him. Here then, the claims of the succeeding generation, not only upon the affection and care, but upon the property of the preceding one attach. God having given to the second generation as full and complete a right to the incomes

and profits of the world—to the soil, to the sun's light and warmth, to the rain, to the chemical and vegetative laws by which the mysterious processes of nature are carried on.—God having given to the second generation, in their turn, as full and complete a right to all these, as he has given to the first; and to the third generation as full and complete a right as to the second, and so on while the world stands, it necessarily follows that they must come into a partial and qualified possession of these rights, by the paramount law of nature, as soon as they are born. No human enactments can abolish or countervail this paramount and supreme law.

It is not at all in contravention of this view of the subject, that the adult portion of society takes upon itself the control and management of all existing property, until the rising generation have arrived at the age of majority. Nay, the object of their so doing is to preserve the rights of the generation which is still in its minority. Society, to this extent, is only a trustee, managing an estate for the benefit of the owner. This civil regulation, therefore, is only in furtherance of the great law we are expounding.

Coincident too, with this great law, is the wonderful provision that the Creator has made for the care of offspring, in the affection of the parents.—Heaven did not rely merely upon our perceptions of duty towards our offspring, and our fidelity in its performance. A powerful, all-mastering instinct of love was therefore implanted in the parental, and especially in the maternal breast, to anticipate the idea of duty, and to make duty a pleasure. For all those children who have been bereaved of parents, or who, worse than bereavement, have only monster-parents of intemperance, or cupidity, or any other form of vice,—society is bound to be a parent, and to exercise the same rational care and providence that a wise father would exercise for his own children.

Another important consideration here meets us; which, however, instead of conflicting with, only confirms and commends the general argument.—We find that previous and present possessors have laid their hand upon the whole earth. They have circumnavigated this planet; they have drawn lines across it, and have partitioned among themselves, not only the whole area or superficial contents, but have claimed it down to the centre, and up to the concave, a great inverted pyramid for each proprietor. They have said to each other, you protect me in the enjoyment of my claim, and I will protect you in the enjoyment of yours.—Thus they have combined together, and have created legislators, and judges, and executive officers, and organized armed bands to repel aggressions upon their claims. And so grasping and rapacious have mankind been, that they have taken more than they could use, more than they could perambulate and survey, more than they could see from the top of the highest mountain. There was some limit to their physical power of taking possession, but none to the exorbitancy of their desires. Like robbers, who divide their spoils before they know whether they shall find a victim, men have claimed a continent while still doubtful of its existence, and spread out their title from ocean to ocean, before their most adventurous pioneers had ever seen a shore of the realms they covered. The whole planet then, having been appropriated, there being no waste and open lands from which the new generations may be supplied as they come into existence, I say the new generations have the strongest conceivable claim upon their predecessors. They have more than a pre-emptive; they have a possessory right to some portion of that, all of which has been appropriated and taken up.

A denial of this right by the present occupants is a breach of trust, a fraudulent misuse of their power. Economically, it is folly; morally, it is embezzlement and fraud.

I think we are now prepared to meet the question fully and directly. At what time, to what extent, and for what purposes, upon the great principles of natural law, is the incoming generation entitled to participate in the benefits of the world's wealth? In answer, their claim to a portion of it begins with the first breath they draw. The newborn infant must have sustenance and shelter and care. If the parents cannot supply these, society succeeds to the place of parents and must supply them. If at any period previous to the age of discretion, the parents are removed, or parental ability fails, society, at that point is bound to step in and fill the parent's place. To deny support and succor to any child, would be equivalent to a sentence of death,—a capital execution of the infant, at which every soul shudders. But to preserve a child's life only, and then to stop, would be,—not the bestowment of a blessing or the performance of a duty, but the infliction of a curse. A child has interests far higher than those of mere physical existence. Better that the interests of the natural life should not be cared for, than that the higher interests of the character should be neglected. If a child has any claims to bread to keep him from perishing, he has far higher claims to knowledge to keep him from error, and its retinue of calamities. If a child has any claim to shelter to protect him from the destroying elements, he has a far higher claim to be rescued from the infamy and perdition of vice and crime. If you will not legalize infanticide, you must supply sustenance. If you will not prepare madmen or incendiaries to destroy property and life, you must enlighten the intellect; if you will not invoke moral ruin, you must train up the young in the way they should go. In a word, you must educate the mind, as well as sustain the mere physical existence.—The time when this obligation attaches, corresponds with the age when the work can be most beneficially and efficaciously performed. As the right of sustenance then is of equal date with birth, the right to systematic intellectual and moral training begins, at least as early as when children are ordinarily sent to school. At that time, then, by the great and irrepensible law of nature, every child succeeds to so much more of the property of the community, as is necessary for his education. He is to receive this, not in the form of property, but in the form of education. This is another step in the transfer of the property of the present to a following generation. Probably this period of transfer, and the amount to be transferred at its arrival, may be modified by circumstances; and if so, the political institutions under which one is born, may have an important bearing upon the question. Certainly, in a republican government, the obligation of the predecessors, and consequently the right of the successors, extends to and embraces the means of such an amount of education as will fit each individual to perform the common duties of a citizen. It may go farther than this point; certainly it cannot stop short of it.

The places and the processes where this transfer is to be provided for, and its amount determined, are the district school meeting, the town meeting, legislative halls, conventions for establishing or revising the fundamental laws of the State. If it be not done there, the community is faithless to its trust.

I bring my argument then to a close; and I present a test of its validity, which, as it seems to me, defies denial or evasion.

In obedience to the laws of God, and to the laws

of all civilized nations, society is bound to protect natural life; and the natural life cannot be protected without the appropriation and use of a portion of the property which society possesses. We prohibit infanticide under penalty of death.—We practice a refinement in this particular. The life of an infant is inviolable even before it is born; and he who feloniously takes it, is as subject to the extreme penalty of the law, as though he had cut down manhood in its vigor, or taken away a mother by violence from the midst of her maternal cares. But why preserve the natural life of a child—why preserve unborn embryos of life, if you do not intend to watch over and protect them, and expand them into usefulness and happiness?—You have no right—neither nature nor God confer any right, to inflict the curse of birth, the curse of ignorance, and vice, and poverty, and all the attendant unspeakable calamities upon any creature. You are brought, then, to this inevitable test. Either extinguish the natural life, or provide the means to make that life a blessing. *Give us the right of infanticide, or give us FREE EDUCATION.*

REMARKS OF MR. HENRY, OF HERKIMER, ON THE FREE SCHOOL RESOLUTION.

Mr. Henry remarked, that he cordially subscribed to the correctness of the views which have been so ably and eloquently presented by the learned gentleman upon his left (Gould Brown.) He gave his full and unreserved assent to the definition of Democracy which had just been given, namely, adequate provision for enabling citizens of every description to perfect themselves with the theory and practice of every department of duty. Catholic Democracy rests satisfied with nothing short of the physical duty, moral and intellectual improvement, the proper development and discipline of the faculties of every individual of which the commonwealth is composed. The right of the people to such an education, was asserted in every fundamental principle of a republic, and it had been this morning vindicated by the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, (Hon. H. Mann,) with an ability and eloquence which cannot fail to carry conviction to every mind. When exposed to the destruction of fire and flood, was not property solely dependent upon manual labor for its preservation? When assailed by the mob, does not property rely upon the people for defence, even to the expense and sacrifice of life? When all that is held invaluable, dear and sacred, is endangered by foreign intrusion, on whom then is the chief reliance placed for security and protection? Can property, then, deny the means of education to the children of citizens who promptly perform these high and perilous duties? No, never. The right to be educated is clear and unquestionable, and it is the indispensable duty of property owners to furnish the necessary means for the enjoyment of this right.

But to "make haste slowly" is the great principle and duty of the enlightened and virtuous reformers. Present fully and truly to the consideration of the people all the facts in the case—give them sufficient time to deliberate, and doubt not for a moment they will come to a proper decision of the matter. He knew that many cities and towns were ready to make their schools perfectly free, but there were others not yet prepared to vote for such a measure. He believed very little additional legislation upon this subject to be called for at present. He thought that giving power to establish free schools to such cities and towns as desired it, and leaving all others to the provisions of the present law, was all that was practicable. Such a measure, he had no doubt, would meet the appro-

bation and support of the people; and such was his confidence in the excellence and superiority of free schools, that he could not doubt that a few years' experiment upon the plan proposed, would see them firmly and immovably established in every town and city of the state.

REMARKS OF PROF. THOMSON.

Prof. J. B. Thomson, of Auburn, asked the indulgence of the convention for a few moments. In reply to the apprehensions expressed by the gentleman from Tompkins, lest some might regard the passage of the resolution as officious, as an infringement upon their privileges, he would say, it is *always safe to do right*. That it is *right* to support free schools, to make education free to all, has been clearly proved by the honorable gentleman from Massachusetts. If, therefore, it is *right* to establish free schools, it is *right and safe* for us to lend them our support, and at all times to express our opinion upon the subject. But he did not believe it would be regarded as a breach of privilege, or as travelling beyond the record, by any intelligent man, for this body to express their opinion upon this subject. He spoke, not as a school officer, but as one of the people, and therefore spoke with the more freedom and confidence. Sir, we the people, desire our delegates, our servants, not only to *think* right, but to *speak* and *act* right.

Though the right of every child to the privileges and blessings of education has been clearly established, he wished to submit another consideration upon this point. In the common transactions of life, if one man receives a favor, an actual good from his neighbor, it is a fundamental law of justice and right, that the recipient should reciprocate the favor, or return an equivalent for the good received.

Now it is evident from observation and the history of the world, that education in its most comprehensive sense, the culture of the intellectual and moral faculties of the young, by storing the public mind with knowledge and training it to habits of self-government, temperance and virtue, has a *direct and powerful tendency to diminish* the violations of law and the perpetration of crime. Hence, every man in the community receives a *direct and palpable benefit* by the diffusion of education. He has a more perfect security and enjoyment of his property, his person, his life, and his character, which is dearer than life. Now, sir, for this guaranty, this moral insurance of his possessions, his life and character, which he receives from the better education of the whole body politic, I maintain, he is bound to pay, upon every principle of justice, as much as he is bound to pay for a policy of insurance on his houses or ships against the ravages of fire and the storms of the ocean. Indeed, the fires and ravages of incarnate depravity are oftentimes more to be dreaded than the raging of the physical elements.

But there is another consideration in favor of free schools to which I would briefly advert; one, which in this calculating age may perhaps be more sensibly felt than the argument of *right*.

I hold it would be a matter of *public economy*, as well as of *sound wisdom and justice* for the state to establish free schools, to send the benign influence of education like the sunlight, into every village, and hamlet, and family in the land.

It has been already remarked, that the history of the world shows that crime decreases in proportion as education is diffused. In like manner, history shows that as ignorance prevails, and the appetites and passions are suffered to go unchecked by the restraining and purifying power of education, transgressions and crimes increase in a *duplicate* rate.

Now, to look after this increased number of transgressions of law, these disturbers of the peace, thieves, and robbers, and midnight assassins, and bring them to justice, obviously requires an increased number of police officers, of constables, and justices, and jurors, and judges. It also requires an increased number of jails and prisons. And who, I ask, is to build and support these jails and prisons, and pay the expenses of this long catalogue of peace officers? Surely no one can expect these rogues and villains themselves will pay the magistrates for the infliction of punishment. In this case, the old adage does not hold true; for they that dance do not pay the fiddler. No, sir, the state must foot the bill. Or rather I should say, this tax comes from your pocket and mine, and the pockets of our neighbors; for be it remembered, it is the people who pay the taxes to support the civil and criminal laws. And it requires no small tax to do it. In examining the supervisors' report of our county expenses the past year, I was astounded with the fact, that more money was raised to support this peace-keeping establishment, than was bestowed upon the common schools during the same time. This, it is presumed, is the case with most if not all the other sections of the state. For I am unwilling to admit that the intelligence and morals of the county of Cayuga, are inferior to those of her neighbors. Besides, sir, this estimate does not include the vast amount of time and money expended by individuals in law suits and arbitrations in order to obtain their just pecuniary dues, and to redress their injuries. Were these items included, the amount would be ten fold greater than that devoted to common schools. Who, therefore, will not agree with me in the position, that it would be a matter of economy for the state to establish at once a system of free schools? If half this sum were annually spent in diffusing knowledge and virtue through the community, who can tell how soon our jails would become tenantless, and our court-houses fall into decay from disuse? And who would not more cheerfully pay a tax to train up an immortal spirit in the way it should go, than to bring old transgressors to punishment? Who will not say, it is better policy and sounder wisdom, to expend money to prevent crime, than it is to punish it after it is committed? Poor, poor indeed must be my consolation after my house is burnt, or the character of my child blasted forever, or its life destroyed—poor must be my consolation to know that the villain who perpetrated the deed is confined in prison, loaded with shackles, or that he is about to expiate his guilt upon the scaffold. Sir, in this case an ounce of prevention is worth a thousand pounds of cure. Again, I therefore ask, is it not most clearly a matter of state economy as well as wisdom and benevolence, to throw open the well-springs of education and invite all to drink freely of its waters?

REPORT OF THE HON. J. D. HAMMOND, ON THE
SMITHSONIAN LEGACY.

The select committee to whom was referred the resolution recommending to the present Congress to adopt such measures as will, in their judgment, carry into immediate effect the intentions of the Donor in respect to the Smithsonian Legacy, respectfully report,

That the want of time has prevented your committee from ascertaining and so arranging the facts in relation to the legacy of Mr. Smithsonian, as to enable them to state the same in their report. Your committee will merely declare their concurrence in the sentiments contained in the resolution, and express their opinion that it ought to be adopted with the amendment subjoined.

Although the object of the resolution may seem not immediately connected with the legitimate business of the convention, yet as the benevolent legislator of this munificent bequest, declared by his will that this donation should be employed to increase and diffuse knowledge among men; as the governing motive of the Superintendents of schools in this State, is the improvement of our system of popular education; as the common or district school is the great, and in the opinion of your committee, the only efficient agent by which the mass of mind can be effectually enlightened; and as our National Representatives have, by neglecting for many years to act in this matter, permitted this fund to remain dormant, contrary to the expressed desire of Mr. Smithsonian, and in violation of the trust reposed in them by him,—the committee believe that the members of this convention, as citizens of the United States and as friends to the diffusion of knowledge among men, have a right, and that it is their duty to speak on this subject.

Resolved, That while this convention are impressed with profound respect and veneration for the memory of the late James Smithsonian, of England, and gratitude for his munificent legacy to the United States, made with a view to the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, they cannot suppress their deep mortification and painful regret that the Representatives of the people of these United States, should have suffered a fund created for such noble and exalted purposes to remain so long unemployed, and they do respectfully, but most earnestly recommend to the present Congress to adopt such measures as will carry into immediate effect the benevolent intentions of the philanthropic and liberal donor.

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution, signed by the President and Secretaries, be forwarded to each of the Senators in the Senate of the United States, from the State of New York.

Communications.

WARREN COUNTY.

DEAR SIR: Lest the impression may go abroad, that the seeds of educational improvement, have been fruitlessly cast upon the stony soil of Warren, I deem it my duty to acquaint you with the efforts and progress making here in this common cause.

From the time of the institution of the office of County Superintendent, there has been throughout the county a violent and deep rooted prejudice against the office, it being considered, both unnecessary and unprofitable. There has been joined with this opinion a prevailing feeling of apathy and indifference to the interests of our common schools. With all of this my predecessors in office have been obliged to contend, and with various success. Where this feeling and sentiment, have obtained the most, (*cæteris paribus*,) the schools are the most backward. Nor is this to be wondered at, for nothing can so effectually paralyze and retard one or any of the best interests of community as sluggish indifference and determined opposition.

To combat these difficulties, the common school convention for the county, held in February last, adopted various vigorous and salutary resolutions, respecting text-books, teachers' institutes, school celebrations, &c., which I felt bound to carry into effect so far as practicable. In accordance with this design by an

arrangement with the publishers of books and our merchants at home, I think there is a fair probability of securing soon a uniformity of text-books for the county. To procure a uniformity and improvement of system in teaching, I have, with the assistance of Mr. Jenkins, a graduate of the Normal school, whose valuable services were freely proffered, held a series of teachers' drills throughout the county, and in most of the towns I am gratified to say with the happiest effects. Generally speaking our efforts were warmly seconded by the teachers, who seemed ambitious to improve in their vocation, and to elevate the character of our common schools.

The improvement which has been effected in the schools through the agency of the teachers, has served to impress favorably, many heretofore opposed to change or improvement. It is in contemplation to hold, during the summer, school celebrations in various parts of the county. These manifestations I trust will give Warren, in common school interests at least, a favorable standing among her sister counties.

A. W. HOLDEN, Co. Sup't.

Official.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, COMMON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT, Albany, June 16, 1846.

The several town superintendents of common schools are hereby required to ascertain and report to the several county superintendents of their respective counties and sections, the amount of compensation charged by and allowed the several town superintendents of their respective towns for the year 1845, for services performed during that year, but no charge for services enjoined by the act in relation to the census should be included. The reports to the county superintendents must be made by the first day of August next. The county superintendents are hereby directed to embody the reports received by them from the town superintendents in a tabular report, showing the amount paid to each town superintendent and the aggregate amount for the whole county or division of the county. The department expects this regulation will be promptly attended to, and there cannot be any difficulty in its execution, as the accounts of the town superintendents for the past year will be found on file in the town clerks' offices, so that the present incumbents not in office the past year, will be able to ascertain the amounts without any difficulty. The county superintendents are desired to direct the attention of the town superintendents to this circular, and to note all delinquencies in their respective reports.

N. S. BENTON,

Supt. Com. Schools.

The County Superintendents will be immediately furnished with blank abstracts for statistical information relating to the condition of the school-houses and their appendages, which they are requested to forward to the several town superintendents of their respective counties and divisions of counties as soon as received by them respectively, and the several town

superintendents are hereby directed to visit the several schools in their respective towns as soon as may be on the receipt of said blank, collect the information required, and report the same to the several county superintendents by the first day of September next.

N. S. BENTON,

Supt. Com. Schools.

Wanted No. 1 of vol. 1 of the District School Journal published at Geneva. If any person has that number, and will forward it to this office, he will confer a favor, and the person or persons from whom it shall be received, shall be entitled to the Journal for one year.

Miscellaneous.

From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.

LOSSES IN FAMILIES.

Many families grow up and live long together without the bond of their affections being once either strained or broken. They know that death is the common lot of humanity; they daily see it carrying off neighbors and acquaintances. Some of their own relations have felt its power, and they have thus become familiar with all the symptoms and fashion of external woe; but the destroyer has never intruded on their own sacred domain. Year after year diseases have prevailed around them and made successive inroads upon every fire-side, but theirs has still escaped. They thus become in some manner singular and isolated from the rest of the world—their hearts certainly not closed against its sympathies, but not deeply exercised in them. If a mother remain long inconsolable for the loss of a child, they think she is not altogether blameless. "All must die," will be the ready suggestion of the pious mind, "Some are early cut off; some are spared long; but the stroke will come. Why then contend with what we cannot help? Resignation is both absolutely necessary and it is proper. Besides, our duties are not ended when those who are dearest to us are taken away. We must still attend to our own interests and make provision for those who are dependent upon us. The business of life must not be interrupted." "It's all true you say," was the reply we once heard given to a female acquaintance by a woman of the humbler rank in Scotland, who had endured serious family bereavements, "but, oh! woman, it's plain you never lost a bairn!"

Such a family as we have been describing, have never had their attachments towards each other, greatly tried. There has been no occasion for a display of indignant unforgiveness on the part of one, or of unwearied persevering love from another. Their feelings are all of an equable cast. This quiet, however, is broken in upon at last. A son, perhaps in the pride of his days, is seized with a grievous disease. His mother watches him with anxiety; but she entertains almost a certain expectation that he will speedily be restored to his former health. None of the symptoms are decidedly against

hope; the sufferer's constitution has not been weakened by intemperance, by irregularity of any kind, or by his previous ailments; so the chance of recovery is in his favor. He still sinks, but all maladies have their crisis; and she thinks, every night, that surely he will be better to-morrow. With what tender solicitude does she minister to the wants of his sick-bed! How she watches his looks, and catches up the faintest expression of a desire on his pallid countenance! Her hopes of his recovery daily become weaker and weaker. Her first expectations of his recovery vanish. Every look of the attending physician is watched with an anguish almost indescribable, and she now seriously apprehends the very worst. The features of her son at length assume the rigid and sunken aspect of those of a corpse, and she cannot mistake the dim glare of the eye before it shuts in everlasting rest. Thus, the delusion comes to an end; and when the child of her affection, perhaps the expected prop of her declining years, at length breathes his last upon her bosom, she feels as if some cord which bound her heart had forever given way. Who can pretend to describe her sufferings, as, stretched afterwards on a couch which almost seems her death-bed, she gives way to a grief which any attempt to interrupt or soften is felt by all her friends as if it would only be an impertinence? The whole frame seems to be convulsed; moans of deepest anguish seem to issue, not from the organs of speech, but from the heart itself, and ever and anon as the terrible image of her dying son with all the horrors of the neighboring death-chamber comes into her mind, (for it will not be banished) she utters frantic cries which pierce the ears of all within the limits of that sorrow-stricken house. When language is found, it is employed in exclamations which testify the love and admiration she felt toward her son—a love far transcending, she now thinks, all she ever experienced towards the rest of her children. The rest, indeed—the fortunate living—seem as nothing in her eyes—it appears to her as if she had never loved any but him, who now lies so powerless, so forlorn, and whom she is never to see again. “My beautiful! my brave!” as the tragic poet has finely expressed a mother’s feelings on such an occasion—him whom everybody loved and admired—who was always so cheerful and so affectionate—can it really be—after all she has seen, this question will occur—that he is no more?

It is fortunate for human nature, that grief, however overwhelming at first, daily becomes less severe. Were the earliest impressions of our sorrow forever to remain unobliterated, the world would speedily be filled with lamentation and woe. Thus time rolls on, and the sufferings of the disconsolate mother become less poignant. The severity of the trial she has endured has softened her nature and made her resigned to the dispensations of an inscrutable Providence. The recollections of her lost son are recalled to her by almost every passing circumstance; if there is an occasion of rejoicing in the family, she thinks “this would have been a time of delight to him, if he had been spared.” She sees the place he would have occupied among his brothers and sisters; she considers the very

words he would have used had he been alive to join in their conversation. If she hears a tune played, she remembers it was his favorite; if she sees a fine landscape, the thought passes in her mind, how he delighted in woodland scenery. Another of her family falls, and another, and another, but she does not deceive herself now. “The first time,” she acknowledges, “she never thought her poor son would die, till she saw him lifeless before her; all the rest, from the moment they were taken ill, she was prepared to see cut off.” The earliest were snatched from her; those that died afterwards were resigned.

Thus does grief soften the heart and teach us not only to sympathise with others, but how to bear our own ills more calmly. But for its humanizing influence, how hard-hearted would men become—how wrapped up each in his own self-sufficiency. Nay, even if the present economy of nature were altered but in a single respect—if the destiny of death were still allotted to all, but were postponed in each individual of our species to a certain period of time, how materially would the aspect of society be altered, and how callous would all the world remain when one by one they saw their fellow-men removed from this earthly scene. Then with truth might people say, “Why mourn for him? his time was come.” It is because of the uncertainty that prevails, because some are cut off in the bud, and some in the prime; some by severity of disease, some by violence; and because we had hopes of enjoying their society longer, or that death might have come in some way less painful to themselves—because we are convinced that the government of affairs is completely beyond our own control and calculation—that we feel and acknowledge our own weakness, how closely we are concerned to possess each others sympathies—how entirely we are dependent upon a higher power. Thus has kind Heaven made our sorest griefs the best blessings, even if we look no farther than to the condition of man in the present world.

LOVE OF SELF.—“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” “Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” These are not arbitrary commandments, to be rewarded in an arbitrary way; they are the essential laws of true humanity. It is an inverted effort for a man to think of himself. The creative endeavor is always that of development; that by which the internal passes into the external—good affections into corresponding acts of usefulness. The eye cannot see itself. It is not easy for an individual to conceive, distinctly and correctly, the peculiar expression of his own countenance; and the effort is not unattended with pain: and this for the plain reason that by the attempt, the powers of the mind are diverted from their proper channel, and the current of life turned back upon itself. No organ in the human body regards itself in its use. All these organs have distinct and separate offices to perform; but it is not for itself, that the heart sends forth the blood; it is not for themselves, that the veins return it. It is not for itself, that the liver secretes the bile; it is not for themselves, that the absorbents select the chyle from

the digested food; or that the glands detect any poison which may be lurking in the system. The latter display a purely disinterested affection, in themselves suffering disease in the effort to protect the other parts. There is no image of self-love in the uses of any of the organs of the human body; for these organs perform their functions from that life which is above the control of ourselves. The first traces of selfishness are discovered, not in the healthy activity of the parts, but their diseases; and that organ which refuses to perform its duty to the rest is the first occasion and seat of the disease. The forms of external politeness, the expressions of friendship, and of dispositions of usefulness to those with whom they have transactions, which even the worst men are obliged hypocritically to assume, convey but an imperfect idea of what we were designed to be in reality."

Poetry.

THE SCHOOL MISTRESS.

BESIDE an unfrequented road
The rustic school house stood—
Its modest front and moss grown roof
Half hidden by the wood.
Around its latticed windows clung
Sweet flowers and fragrant vines,
And just in front—like sentinels—
Grew two protecting pines.

Few travellers ever passed that spot,
But stopped awhile to gaze
Upon a scene that brought to mind
Their happy school-boy days.
And none e'er turned away but left
A blessing and a prayer,
For both the Teacher and the taught
Who daily gathered there.

It was my lot, one summer morn,
To journey o'er this road,
And there for full an hour or more
I rested with my load:
One after one across the fields,
The tidy children ran,
Ambitious to secure their seats
Before the school began.

A score of faces, bright and clean,
Soon gathered at the door—
A happier group I've seen not since
And never saw before.
The merry shout—the ringing laugh,
With music filled the air—
And my sad heart forgot its griefs,
The sinless glee to share.

But soon a watchful child proclaimed
The mistress near at hand,
And murmurs of delight were breathed
Throughout the little band.
I'll ne'er forget that lovely face—
I see it yet in dreams—
And ever to my spirit's eye
An angel face it seems.

As rapidly she pressed the turf
And passed the easy stiles,
Her glowing cheeks and rosy lips
Were wreathed with radiant smiles.
Amid her charge she stood at last—
Each answered to her call:
Her usual greeting then I saw—
A kiss for one and all.

This o'er, she led them in and soon
Low murmurs filled the air;
I listened breathless and in awe,
To her impassioned prayer.
The sweet "amen" the children said:
And then a hymn they sung—
And then I heard the studious hum
From every busy tongue.

I trust I was a better man
When I resumed my way,
And never shall my heart forget
The lesson of that day.
O God! on that young Teacher's head
Let thy best gifts descend;
As she to those young, sinless souls,
Be thou to her, a friend.

SPEAK GENTLY.

Speak gently; it is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently—let no harsh words mar
The good we might do here.

Speak gently—love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind,
And gently friendship's accents flow—
Affection's voice is kind.

Speak gently to the little child,
Its love be sure to gain—
Teach it in accents soft and mild;
It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the young, for they
Will have enough to bear:
Pass through this life as best they may,
'Tis full of anxious care.

Speak gently to the aged one;
Grieve not the care-worn heart;
The sands of life are nearly run—
Let such in peace depart.

Speak gently, kindly, to the poor—
Let no harsh tone be heard;
They have enough they must endure
Without an unkind word.

Speak gently to the erring—know
They must have toiled in vain;
Perchance unkindness made them so—
Oh! win them back again.

Speak gently! He who gave his life
To bend man's stubborn will
When elements were fierce with strife,
Said to them, "Peace! be still."

Speak gently—'tis a little thing
Dropped in the heart's deep well;
The good, the joy which it may bring
Eternity shall tell!

EVENING BELLS.

Those evening bells, those evening bells,
How many a tale their music tells,
Of days gone by when childish glee
And boyish sports made sorrow flee.

TERMS.

FIFTY CENTS A YEAR, PAYABLE IN-
VARIABLY IN ADVANCE.